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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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The Honorable Tim Kaine
Governor of Virginia
State Capitol
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Dear Governor Kaine:

I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for you to engage in the debate involving the siting of huge transmission power lines across parts of the northern tier of the Commonwealth. You know from my previous letters how closely I have been following this issue. I want to take this opportunity to bring you up to speed on the latest developments.

Last Thursday night a senior member of my staff attended a meeting at Lovettsville Elementary School where more than 350 area residents turned out to learn more about Allegheny Power's PATH project. The fire marshal at one point stopped letting people into the school because it was so crowded. On Friday, I attended a meeting in Frederick County of local elected officials from Virginia and West Virginia. The message at that meeting was clear: they, and their constituents, are not happy and feel that the power companies are just ramming these huge power lines down their throats.

At Friday's meeting I encouraged the elected officials on hand to reach out to their respective governors and U.S. senators to express their concerns. I again urge you to convene a meeting – preferably in the northern tier of the state – where concerned citizens, elected officials and power company representatives can come together in a public setting to hear once and for all just why these lines are needed and who is being served by them. One of the representatives from Allegheny told my staff Thursday night that a public hearing where citizens were allowed to ask power company representatives questions in front of everyone in attendance – rather than the static, one-on-one trade show type of meetings the company hosted at the elementary school – is not something the company likes to do. Clearly, they know these types of meetings do not play in their favor.

There is a great deal of concern, particularly on the PATH project, that Virginia is just a “pass through” for New Jersey and New York. You are well aware of the controversy surrounding the TrAIL project. I have repeatedly asked to be shown how the power companies have determined their future needs and have yet to receive a satisfactory answer. Particularly disturbing is the recent article in *The Washington Post* saying that local homes and businesses used about 2 percent less electricity in the first nine months of 2008 than they did in 2007.

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As you might expect, there is a great deal of interest in the siting of these lines and the theme of the comments I have received about them is consistent:

- There has not been enough input as to how these lines are going to be built and the routes that they will follow.
- The value of the investment that residents have made in their homes and in their land will be heavily impacted. (Some of my constituents have been told that the towers along the route of the PATH project could be as high as 17 stories.)
- New technology is being used in other countries that would significantly reduce the impact on the residents' property while still transmitting necessary power. Why is it not being used here?

I am deeply concerned that once the PATH proposal is submitted to the State Corporation Commission, it will be very difficult for the residents to effect any changes, as was the case with the TrAIL project. The SCC, in my opinion, has just become a rubber stamp for the power companies. The commissioners should be required to attend hearings in the affected areas and not rely on the recommendations of staff.

It is imperative that a strong message be conveyed to the power companies that the routes and the technology of these transmission lines are of grave concern to both the elected officials in the Commonwealth and the residents of the affected counties.

Before I close, I want to make another appeal for you to also convene a meeting with your counterparts in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland to set in motion discussion of an "interstate compact" process for the siting of these huge transmission lines.

Your personal involvement in this issue is critical.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

People are really concerned about
what this is doing to their community
Thank You -